

23rd August 2007

About 250 delegates from 12 countries of the continents of Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia and America are participating in this forum.

The 18th World Forum got off to a colourful start with the lighting of the Lamp and a prayer song sung by the Deepalaya students.

Mr T. K. Mathew, Secretary & Chief Executive of Deepalaya welcomed all the delegates and stressed the importance of the theme "Millennium Development Goals and their Implications for Children".

Mr Bruce Rivers, President of the IFCW, gave a brief introduction of IFCW and its Executive Committee members and declared the World Forum 2007 open. Delivering the key note address Dr Shantha Sinha, Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and winner of Magsaysay Award reminded that every child has to be free and histories of children in the world should become one history. Millennium Development Goals have to be embedded in the right based perspective of children and all children must be without hunger, ill-health and malnutrition. It is impractical for children to be hungry and not to go to school, pointed out Dr Sinha. Our democracy, she added, cannot be deepened without protection of children's rights.

Spiced with songs and dances by Deepalaya students, the **Inaugural Function** was a memorable treat to the gathering numbering 300. At the end of the inaugural session Ms Sharon Osborne, Treasurer of IFCW gave the Vote of Thanks.

The first **Plenary Session** that followed the inaugural function was moderated by Ms Elba Montalvo, Secretary, IFCW. Delegates deliberated on "**Child Rights, Linkage with MDGs and Role of IFCW**". Speaking on the topic Ms Razia Ismail, Co-covonor of the India Alliance for Child Rights, reminded the gathering that India has the largest child population in the world and called for a reality check about MDG and child rights. The UN Convention on Child Rights, 1989, which were reiterated in 2000 at the Millennium summit, still remains as a list of rights. Ms Ismail raised important questions for deliberation. Chief among them were if goals specified in the MDGs sufficiently covered all child rights and if we were doing well enough with these MDGs.



Today at a Glance (Thursday, 23rd August)

1000 - 1100	Plenary III: Market Forces & their Impact on Child Rights
1100 - 1130	Tea Break
1130 - 1300	Panel Discussion - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
1300 - 1400	Lunch
1400 - 1530	Plenary IV: Government Facilitation Towards Achievement of the MDGs Political Will
1530 - 1600	Tea Break
1600 - 1730	Panel Discussion - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women - All MDGs
1730 - 1745	Concluding Remarks
1745 - 1845	General Assembly (only IFCW)

70% of the children in developing countries are drop-outs, out of which 37% are poor and 57% are girls

Mr Bruce Rivers spoke about the rights of the children, the challenges and opportunities to achieve these rights, and delved on the rights to survival, protection and development. Speaking about the challenges, he cited the not so impressive economic and social indicators of even the developed countries, and touched on the issues of sexual exploitation, child soldiers, HIV/AIDS, child labour and plight of girl children.

The **Panel Discussion on *Child Rights issues of Child Development Universal Primary Education***, was moderated by Mr Alan Davis, Member-at-Large, IFCW. Dr Ray Cleary stated that even in Australia, a significant percentage of the population, is struggling to survive. Nearly 50,000 children don't have access to regular food. Concluding his talk, Dr Cleary declared that, "to invest in children is to invest in our future". Prof. R Govinda from the Institute of Education, emphasized that the discourse on poverty must be looked at from a different angle, namely as "Capable Poverty". He explained that there existed three ways of exclusion: firstly, there are the "invisible children" who never attended schools; secondly, one out of two children are drop outs more often due to child labor and thirdly, there are 85% of children in India who are physically present in the schools but who don't learn enough to compete in later life, their fate referred to as "silent exclusion". Dr Asha Singh, Professor Lady Irwin College said that the early childhood years are the period of rapid growth, exploration, experimentation and building strong foundation.

Panel Discussion on *Child Rights & HIV/AIDS Awareness* was moderated by Dr Lily Rilantono, Member-at-Large, IFCW. Ms Jyotsna Rajvanshi, Child Line stressed that social justice must begin with children and emphasised the 3 Ps. Provision; Protection; and Participation. Ms Aravinda Satyawada, Sehgal Foundation focussed on reviewing lost childhood through education and equality, specifically about 'Mewat' region in Haryana.



Plenary II *Partnership "A Way Forward"* was moderated by Dr. Ray Dean Salvosa, Member-at-Large, IFCW. Swami Agnivesh highlighted that education, is the only way to reduce/remove child labour. Prof. T. K. Oommen exhorted that Social responsibility is partnering for child welfare and called for not just ideal but also equal partnership.

The **Panel Discussion on *Global Partnership for Development*** was moderated by Mr Mauri Upanne, Member-at-large, IFCW. Ms Elba Montalvo, also a Member-at-large, IFCW, and Executive Director, The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. (CHCF) mentioned that the UNICEF was the only UN agency mandated to advocate for children's rights through the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It supports programs that provide education, counseling, and care to Children and works in 158 countries and territories in partnership with governments, other UN agencies, and NGOs to provide health, education, nutrition, immunization, and protection for every child. Mr Kumar Swamy, Dalit Freedom Network stated that Partnership is the only chance for our future. Mr Geoff Pawson, CEO, Ranchi Ehrlo Society mentioned the 4 corner stones of the agency as being residential treatment, work, education and recreation.

Panel Discussion on *Reduce Child Mortality and Improve Maternal Health* was chaired by Ms Raksha Bhyana, Member, IFCW. Mr Subrata Dutta stressed the need to promote breast feeding as the exclusive feed for infants for the first 6 months as a means of combating 3 major killer diseases of infants Diarrhoea, Pneumonia and infections affecting the new born. The other benefits of exclusive breast feeding were also discussed. Ms Shireen Miller, Head of Policy, Save the Children spoke on the subject citing child mortality statistics and indicating the way forward.

Internationally renowned Odissi dancer Ms Sharon Lowen (also a friend of Deepalaya) enchanted the audience with her students during the cultural evening.



In East Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific sub-region where literacy has reached a high level of 91.7 percent, disparities between countries and the gender gap remain. The literacy rate ranges from 98 percent to under 60 percent. And 70 percent of illiterates in the sub-region are women.

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